IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of growing commercially valuable trees to improve plant establishment, growth, and input management of water, nutrients and pesticides comprising the steps of:

creating a hole in the earth;

preparing the hole to influence the downward growth of the root system of a tree planted therein by lining the walls of the hole with a flexible casing which is substantially impervious to water and nutrients for root growth and is self-sealing such that the self-sealing ~~material~~ casing will seal tightly to the walls of the hole to inhibit the migration of water from the surface or near the surface to deeper levels, which might otherwise occur at the portion between the walls of the hole and the flexible casing;

at least partially filling the hole with a rooting medium;

planting a tree in the at least partially filled hole; ~~and~~

providing a berm-like structure around the hole which is separate from the flexible casing and does not extend to the bottom of the flexible casing, wherein the berm-like structure is a ring; and

establishing and growing the tree by controlling root development and access to water, nutrients, and pesticides so that the root system of such tree grows within the hole, and becomes long and narrow.

2. (canceled)

3. (canceled)

4. (canceled)

5. (canceled)

6. (canceled)

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of lining the walls of the hole with a flexible casing includes the step of providing a disposable or biodegradable flexible casing.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of lining the walls of the hole with a flexible casing includes the step of providing a permanent flexible casing.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further including the step of providing an additive in at least a portion of the walls of the hole to facilitate the creation of a seal between the flexible casing and soil outside of the hole.

10. (canceled)

11. (canceled)

12. (canceled)

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further including the step of providing a removable cartridge at least partially in the lined hole.

14. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of providing a removable cartridge includes the step of providing a rigid removable cartridge.

15. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein the step of providing a rigid removable cartridge includes the step of

providing a rigid removable cartridge comprising a plurality of units.

16. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein the step of providing a rigid removable cartridge includes the step of providing a rigid removable cartridge comprising a plurality of interlocking units.

17. (original) The method of claim 13, further including the step of at least partially filling the cartridge with a rooting medium.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of planting a tree in the at least partially filled hole further includes the step of providing a removable cartridge of tree-root system and rooting medium at least partially in the lined hole, whereby the structure of the cartridge influences the root system of such tree to grow downward within the cartridge.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further including the step of covering the surface of the earth at the top of the hole in order to prevent service water from entering the hole.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further including the step of providing access tubing at least partially in the at least partially filled hole.

21. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of providing access tubing includes providing aeration tubing to allow air exchange between the surface and throughout the root zone of a tree planted therein.

22. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of providing the access tubing includes providing irrigation tubing to allow water to be administered throughout the root zone of a tree planted therein.

23. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of providing the access tubing includes providing fertilization tubing to allow fertilizer to be administered throughout the root zone of a tree planted therein.

24. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of providing the access tubing includes providing pesticide tubing to allow pesticides to be administered throughout the root zone of a tree planted therein.

25. (canceled)

26. (canceled)

27. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the berm-like structure is attached to the flexible casing.

28. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the berm-like structure is repositioned on, in, or around the flexible casing.

29. (new) A method of growing commercially valuable trees to improve plant establishment, growth, and input management of water, nutrients and pesticides comprising the steps of:

creating a hole in the earth;

preparing the hole to influence the downward growth of the root system of a tree planted therein by lining the walls of the hole with a flexible casing which is substantially impervious to water and nutrients for root growth and is self-sealing such that the self-sealing casing will seal tightly

to the walls of the hole to inhibit the migration of water from the surface or near the surface to deeper levels, which might otherwise occur at the portion between the walls of the hole and the flexible casing, wherein the step of lining the walls of the hole with a flexible casing includes the step of spraying a material on the walls of the hole to provide the flexible casing;

at least partially filling the hole with a rooting medium;

planting a tree in the at least partially filled hole; and

establishing and growing the tree by controlling root development and access to water, nutrients, and pesticides so that the root system of such tree grows within the hole, and becomes long and narrow.